

CALIFORNIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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SERVING THE CATTLE
COMMUNITY SINCE 1917



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Submitted electronically via email

March 23, 2020

Honorable Senators and Representatives:

The California Cattlemen's Association is a grassroots membership organization representing more than 1,700 beef producers in California. California's cattle ranchers are reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, with cattle markets severely impacted by the crisis. Even in the face of uncertainty regarding the viability of their small businesses and their own financial well-being, though, California's ranchers continue to work hard to produce nutritious beef to restock the rapidly-emptying meat cases of the nation's grocery stores, ensuring that America can weather the current crisis. Both the state and federal governments have declared that securing the food chain is essential during this pandemic, and ranchers are among the earliest links in that chain.

As you are well-aware, California is the largest agricultural-producing state in the nation. The ranching community is a significant driver of California's agricultural economy: in 2018, cattle and calves represented California's fourth most valuable agricultural commodity, with cash receipts totaling \$3.19 billion. To promote the stability of the ranching industry and ensure that California's food supply chain and economy can weather this crisis, CCA requests that you vote in favor of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which among other things increases the borrowing authority of the Commodity Credit Corporation from \$30 billion to \$50 billion to assist farmers and ranchers during the present crisis. Additionally, as you continue to explore legislation to provide relief from the COVID-19 crisis, CCA urges you to consider the following measures:

- A one-time stimulus payment (or payments) to cattle producers to provide relief from the severe decline in the cattle markets and to place ranchers on a more secure footing to ensure that they can continue providing Americans nutritious beef throughout this crisis. CCA stands ready to assist Congress and USDA in establishing formulas for such payments;
- Remove barriers and enhance access to low-interest or no-interest capital for ranchers;
- Take action to ensure that agricultural labor can continue working throughout the crisis—including by ensuring access to any necessary protective equipment—and eliminate obstacles relating to agricultural labor;
- Facilitate efficient transportation of agricultural products to ensure that food makes it to consumers in a timely fashion, including removing barriers to the international and interstate transportation of agricultural goods;
- Explore establishing a permanent USDA disaster relief program relating to catastrophic collapse in agricultural commodity markets, allowing producers to better manage risk in

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FEEDER COUNCIL VICECHAIR
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times of crisis such as this, and explore modifications to existing USDA programs to provide relief in the present crisis;

- Take all measures necessary to ensure that USDA and other vital federal agencies remain fully staffed and fully operational throughout this crisis to allow efficient movement of the food supply chain;
- Take action to incentivize the marketing of cattle on the cash market; and
- Ensure that USDA aggressively monitor cattle markets for price manipulation, and act to prohibit and institute strong enforcement against any market manipulation.

CCA appreciates your diligent efforts in response to COVID-19 on behalf of Californians to date. As you work to negotiate the CARES Act and any future relief packages, we hope that you will be mindful of the above measures to help secure the substantial driver of the state's economy which is the cattle ranching sector. Should you desire to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 444-0845 or kirk@calcattlemen.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirk Wilbur', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kirk Wilbur
Vice President of Government Affairs